

## **Rapa Nui: Patrimonio natural y cultural**

Enma Maldonado Gac, Julio Hotus Salinas and  
Francisco Valiente Garces. 2004.

Fundación OCAC, Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena, Chile. In Spanish.

THE REVIEWER, XIMENA CEARDI of *El Mercurio de Valparaíso*, describes this book as being "somewhere between a book and a booklet...whose objective is the presentation of cultural and natural patrimony.... It covers the culture, the history, the Rapanui terrain and flora with abundant photographs and has a nice description of medicinal herbs, flowering bushes, fish, birds and marine shells...."

*El Mercurio de Valparaíso*, May 8, 2005.

## **The Moai Murders**

by Lyn Hamilton, 2005.

Berkley Crime Time, New York.

261 pages, hard cover. ISBN 0-425-20044-2

Review by Georgia Lee

THE MOAI MURDERS WOULD BE a good book to take along on the flight home from a visit to Rapa Nui; reading time is just about the same as the flight time. The story can help you remember the sites you visited, and maybe you might learn a bit more about the island's history. But the book mainly is aimed at those who love mysteries, and it just happens to be set on our favorite island.

The story line is complicated; it involves a missing *rongorongo* board and the archaeological conference from hell, one being conducted on the island and specifically at the Hotel Iorana. While those who attend archaeological conferences are aware of the often bitter infighting that can occur between researchers with different points of view and different agendas, I must say that the particular meeting described in the book, while often a bit close to the bone, does go beyond the norm. I have not yet been to an archaeological conference where many of the participants are murdered, although such happenings might improve the discipline of archaeology.

My main complaint about the book is that, with very few exceptions, the Rapanui people themselves are invisible. Only a few islanders are thrown into the story line, and these are mainly for background color.

## **MOAI SIGHTINGS**

A BAR IN THE NUGGET HOTEL in Reno, Nevada, advertises "Island Drinks" and amongst the usual suspects (Zombie, Pina Colada, Blue Hawaiian, etc.) they offer an "Aku-Aku" which is described as a ginger brandy base decorated with a flaming sugar cube; and "Easter Island Grog", a mixture of Cuban and Jamaican rums served in a communal bowl. Neither have any relation to Easter Island's signature drink, the Chilean firewater called pisco, which usually is mixed with lime juice and sugar for a dynamite drink.

Our thanks to Rapanuiphile, Kathy Cleghorn, who spotted this list of so-called Polynesian drinks.



On their way to a wedding, Gadi Reinhorn (right) and John Campbell stopped to help some grad students at Cornell University (Ithaca, NY) raise a paper mache moai. When they asked why the moai was made, the students replied, "We're in grad school, what else are we supposed to do?" Photo by Danielle Gillis.

## **WHAT'S NEW IN THE PACIFIC**

### **VANUATU**

ALL VEHICLES UNDER THE MINISTRY OF LANDS, Geology, Mines, Energy, and Water Resources are switching to coconut bio-fuel. Amidst rising prices of oil worldwide, Vanuatu is one of the few Pacific Island nations that is looking to coconut oil as an ecologically sound petroleum alternative. It is cheap, efficient, and renewable. Aside from Vanuatu, the Marshall Islands, Samoa and the Cook Island use coconut oil as fuel for diesel engines, but still on a small scale.

*Pacific News Bulletin*, January 2005, page 3.

THE SOUTH PACIFIC SEA LEVEL and Climate Monitoring Project is measuring sea levels and other variables in twelve Pacific Island countries, including Cook Islands, Tonga, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands. The project, funded by the Australian government, addresses the concerns of Pacific Island governments and provides accurate information on sea level and climate change.

*Oceanic Waves*, Vol. 7:1 for March 2005.

*University of the South Pacific, Suva.*

### **SUVA, FIJI**

SPEAKING AT THE GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY for Paradise Point Resort on Yasawa-i-Rara Island, Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase told *The Fiji Times* that he was happy that tourism was flourishing because it helps to improve the living standards of the people living there. Members of the landowning unit, Mataqali Nataalum, will be given first chance to be employed at the resort and they will be given 10 percent of shares in the operating company. Qarase said opportunities in management training would be available for the islanders.

There are plans to build a new airstrip on the island and, in the future, there also may be an improvement in maritime services, upgrading of sports facilities, and water supply for homes. The company behind Paradise Point Resort, Hiway Stabilizers, claims that the natural environment will be conserved and the local culture respected. They, in partnership with Marphona Farms, initially invested in a 50-year lease for almost 30,000 acres of land, as well as assisting with the maintenance of roads in Fiji. The Fijian government is trying to attract foreign investors to build more hotels and resorts.

Filipe Cula, *www.fiji.gov.fj*, 9 June 2005

THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE is providing funds to the University of the South Pacific's Institute of Applied Science to carry out its third season of research at the earliest known human settlement in Fiji, the Bourewa site in the southwest of Viti Levu. A research team led by Professor Patrick Nunn of the Dept. of Geography will be comprised of students and staff from USP, the Fiji Museum, Australian National University, University of Otago, Kyoto University, Université Laval (Canada) and the Université Française du Pacifique. Finds from the site are marked by abundant Lapita age pottery making this site one of the very first "founder" settlements in the Fiji Islands. Radiocarbon dates show that the village was settled as early as 1260 BC, and probably abandoned around 500 BC to 600 BC.

USP Beat, Suva, Fiji. Vol. 5(8):1-2 May 2005.

THE KAVA INDUSTRY on the island of Taveuni is nearly destroyed due to a disease called "yaqona dieback". Five years ago, the yaqona crop earned the islanders some US\$6 million in revenue but now the disease has destroyed 70% of the island's yaqona crop. Because it is a virus, spraying does not kill the disease, and no one knows how to get rid of it.

USP Beat, Suva, Fiji. Vol. 5(7), May 2005.

THE VILLAGERS OF NAMALATA claim that Mago Island was stolen from their ancestors in the 1800s and they are now protesting the sale of the island to movie star Mel Gibson. Gibson is said to have purchased the island from Japan's Tokyu Corp for US\$15 million. Villagers of Namalata claim that Mago island was sold for 200 coconut plants, one of many alleged dubious land deals dating back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A Tribunal will try to find out who is the rightful owner, but most land claims are based on oral records, things told by the elders, so there is no "paper trail."

Pacific News Bulletin Vol. 19(3):7. 2005.

MORE HUMAN SKELETONS have been found at Bourewa, southwest Viti Levu. Dating from about 3000 years ago, the skeletons were overlain by an undisturbed layer of soil containing pottery that dates from around 650 BC. The 32-person team from the University of the South Pacific and the Fiji Museum, led by Patrick Nunn of USP, found the site. Nunn suggests that Bourewa was the earliest human settlement in the Archipelago of Fiji, probably first occupied around 1200 BC. Nunn added that the skeletons were associated with Lapita pottery dating from about 1050 BC. Some of the pottery has designs typical of Early Lapita (ca. 1250 BC) in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Nunn added that the

Bourewa colonists likely came either from Papua New Guinea or the Solomon Islands, rather than from another place in Fiji. The number of pots bearing designs like those of the Solomons suggests that the people of Bourewa came from there. A piece of obsidian was also found at Bourewa; it almost certainly came from the Talasea mine in Papua New Guinea and was carried at least 4500 km to Bourewa, probably as a talisman. An excavation at Natadola last year uncovered a piece of Lapita pottery with a face on it. It has been dated as far as back as 1260 BC, or 3264 years ago. This piece suggests direct contact between the Natadola site and the Bismark Archipelago, some 3400 km away.

USP Beat, Suva, Fiji. Vol. 5(13) July 2005.

#### KIRIBATI

HUGE TIDES HIT THE LOW-LYING ATOLLS in Kiribati in February. A tide measuring 2.87 meters destroyed parts of villages, agricultural land, and contaminated fresh-water wells. The hospital at Betio was flooded. Coral atolls are particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels and although Kiribati often experiences "king" tides, rising sea levels make them all the more destructive.

Pacific News Bulletin, Vol. 20(2):2. February 2005.

#### SAMOA

MORE AND MORE SAMOANS are going into party politics in a move away from the traditional system of selecting leaders for Parliament. Previously the norm was to select leaders according to their Matai title (standing in the community). Traditional Samoan society is based upon a chieftdom system of hereditary rank, known as the Fa'a Samoan way of life. Things are changing; more people are getting into Parliament because they have a good education or are successful businessmen, and can give back perks to those who support them during their campaign. In the period before elections, Matai titles were conferred in large numbers, increasing the odds of getting elected.

Pacific News Bulletin, Vol. 20(1), January 2005

#### HAWAII

THE GOVERNOR OF HAWAII along with other leading Hawaiians has extracted a promise of Senate action on legislation to give native Hawaiians the same rights of self-government as that enjoyed by American Indians and native Alaskans. The legislation would formally recognize the country's 400,000 native Hawaiians as an indigenous people. It would also set up a process under which the native Hawaiian governing entity could negotiate with federal and state governments over land, resources, and other assets.

Pacific News Bulletin 19(3):3. 2005.

THE POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER at La'ie, Oahu's windward coast, has a new Polynesian village set up to show the culture and art of Easter Island. The display has seven moai created "on site" by Rapanui stone carvers. Two are reclining, in a partially finished state, and five are upright on a newly-fabricated ahu. This exhibit also has a Rapa Nui house (hare vaka), a manavai, and a stone house like those at 'Orongo. The Rapa Nui village joins other "villages" at the Center that present the cultures of Fiji, the Marquesas, Samoa, Tonga, and the Māori of New Zealand.

San Francisco Chronicle 7-10-05.

RESIDENTS OF MOLOKAI are rushing to gasoline stations. Suddenly and without warning, most of the island's population has been mobbing the pumps, waiting in two-mile lines for an hour or more, anxiously filling their gas tanks and their five-gallon cans. Gas station owners insist there's no shortage of gas on the island. But rumors of shortages effectively create the very shortages that are rumored. Gas prices, already at over \$3 per gallon, are no restraint. Residents want gas for their cars, trucks and home generators; tourists want gas to avoid being stranded mid-way on 4-day island tours. So they'll pay any price.

*Money and Markets, Aug 22, 2005.*

### THE TAIWANESE CONNECTION

GENETIC TECHNIQUES INVOLVING MITOCHONDRIAL DNA (mtDNA) have been used to determine whether there is a link between Polynesians and other Southeast Asian populations by estimating how much mtDNA different populations have in common. Early results were conflicting or inconclusive. Recent research by J. A. Trejaut et al. has finally nailed this down. Trejaut and his team analyzed mtDNA from people in China, Southeast Asia, Polynesia, and Taiwan, focusing specifically on the aboriginal populations of Taiwan, which are suggested to be the ancestors of today's Polynesians. They looked for unique genetic markers that occurred in the aboriginal people and compared these markers to those found in mainland Chinese, Taiwanese, and other Southeast Asian peoples.

Trejaut et al. found that the indigenous Taiwanese, Melanesian, and Polynesian populations share three specific mutations in their mtDNA that do not occur in mainland east Asian populations. Furthermore, they showed that there are enough different mtDNA mutations between the mainland Chinese population and the aboriginal Taiwanese to support archeological findings suggesting a long period of habitation, indicating that Taiwanese aboriginal populations have been genetically isolated from mainland Chinese for 10,000 to 20,000 years, and that Polynesian migration probably originated from people identical to the aboriginal Taiwanese. Further research will be necessary to precisely determine the origins of the aboriginal Taiwanese; however, these results are a step towards clarifying the origins of Polynesians.

Genetic affinities between aboriginal Taiwanese and populations from Oceania and Southeast Asia have previously been explored through analyses of mitochondrial DNA, Y chromosomal DNA, and human leukocyte antigen loci. Recent genetic studies have supported the "slow boat" model, according to which the Polynesian migration can be seen as an expansion from Melanesia without any major direct genetic thread leading back to its initiation from Taiwan. Trejaut et al. assessed mtDNA variation in 640 individuals from nine tribes of the central mountain ranges and east coast regions of Taiwan. In contrast to the Han populations, the tribes showed a low frequency of haplogroups D4 and G, and an absence of haplogroups A, C, Z, M9, and M10. Also, more than 85% of the maternal lineages were nested within haplogroups B4, B5a, F1a, F3b, E, and M7. Although indicating a common origin of the populations of insular Southeast Asia and Oceania, most mtDNA lineages in Taiwanese aboriginal popula-

tions are grouped separately from those found in China and the Taiwan general (Han) population, suggesting a prevalence in the Taiwanese aboriginal gene pool of its initial late Pleistocene settlers. From complete mtDNA sequencing information, most B4a lineages were associated with three coding region substitutions, defining a new subclade, B4a1a, that endorses the origin of Polynesian migration from Taiwan. Coalescence times of B4a1a were  $13.2 \pm 3.8$  thousand years (or  $9.3 \pm 2.5$  thousand years in Papuans and Polynesians). Because of a lack of a common specific Y chromosomal element shared by the Taiwanese aboriginals and Polynesians, the mtDNA evidence is also consistent with the suggestion that the proto-Oceanic societies were mainly matrilo-

J. A. Trejaut, T. Kivisild, J. H. Loo, C. L. Lee, C. L. He, C. J. Hsu, Z. Y. Li, and M. Lin. 2005. Traces of archaic mitochondrial lineages persist in Austronesian-speaking Formosan populations. *PLoS Biol* 3(8): e247. June 5, 2005 by the Public Library of Science ([www.plos.org](http://www.plos.org))

WE OBTAINED FURTHER COMMENT about the above item from Elizabeth Matisoo-Smith (University of Auckland) who adds that what Trejaut et al. found in the Taiwanese aboriginals is the precursor to the Polynesian motif, not the full motif. It dates to about 13,000-16,000 BP. Thus the ancestors of the Polynesians could have come from anywhere in the entire region, from Taiwan through island Southeast Asia. While this motif has not been found in the Philippines as yet, Professor Matisoo-Smith suggests that the absence likely is due to a lack of sampling. And, she adds that the entire migration of peoples into the Pacific and Remote Oceania was neither a simple nor a single process.

### RAROTONGA

CIGUATERA FISH POISONING is on the rise in Rarotonga. Ciguatera results from eating reef fish that are affected by ciguatoxins; this poison affects animals as well as people, and involves certain types of fish (mullet, grouper and cod). It begins with coral-grazing fishes and then passes up through the food chain. Ocean fish, such as tuna, are not affected. Ciguatera originates from a micro-algae called *Gambierdiscus toxicus*, which inhabits coral beds. In Hawai'i, ciguatera has been linked to shoreline pollution, particularly in areas where soil runoff from developments or drainage outfalls contaminates the ocean; the nutrient-rich contaminants then fertilize the algae, which reef fish eat. Neither cooking nor freezing affects the toxin.

Contributing factors to the high concentration of ciguatera around Rarotonga include large-scale reef destruction, an increase in water temperature, increased nutrients in the water from untreated sewage and fertilizers, the dumping of rubbish, and other activities that damage the reef. Symptoms of ciguatera poisoning include nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, muscle ache, burning sensations, weakness, and itching. Veterinarians warn against feeding suspect fish to their animals.

Matariki Wilson, *Cook Islands News*, June 6, 2005  
<http://www.cinews.co.ck/index.htm>



## TAHITI

THE MAJORITY OF TAHITI'S POLITICAL LEADERS reacted negatively to a proposed French law that some see as a threat to last year's autonomy gains. The proposal, made by French Overseas Minister Brigitte Girardin, calls for automatic application in French Polynesia of sovereignty laws adopted by the French Parliament; expanding the powers of the French State's Pape'ete-based high commissioner; restrictions on customs and taxation; and tighter controls on the French overseas territory's capital investments. The proposals would modify the revised autonomy statute approved last February by the French Parliament. The French daily newspaper *Les Nouvelles de Tahiti* (LNDT) revealed the proposed organic law with a full front-page exposé. Some went so far as to accuse the French State of "duplicity," attempting to return the governing of French Polynesia to what it was like during colonial times. This could encroach upon Tahiti's existing powers, or destabilize the existing balance of powers. Many were "surprised and disconcerted" by the proposals that may "nibble" away at French Polynesia's powers, and also increase the powers of the French High Commissioner.

*Tahitipresse, Pape'ete, June 10, 2005*

TAHITIAN PEARLS. On July 5<sup>th</sup>, the 31<sup>st</sup> International Tahitian Pearls Auction took place in Pape'ete. All 96 lots were purchased; the five most important buyers were local businessmen. Subsequently, some Tahitians were questioned in New Caledonia where Customs control and surveillance squads trailed and then intercepted four persons in Noumea who were found to have some 1500 pearls in their possession, illegally imported from Tahiti.

*Tahitipresse, Pape'ete, July 7, 2005*

## PITCAIRN ISLAND

SIX MEN FROM PITCAIRN were found guilty of raping women and girls as young as 10, in some cases their own sisters. The allegations date back to 1967. The men's defense lawyers hope to prevent the convictions from being entered into the record by saying that Britain failed to inform Pitcairners that they were subject to British law. Now defense lawyers are trying to stop the child-sex case by claiming that no one on Pitcairn knew that child rape, incest and gang rape were illegal.

Pitcairn public defender Paul Dacre, a New Zealand-based barrister, claimed that the prosecutions are a denial of justice, an abuse of process and violate the men's human rights. "English criminal statutes were not plainly and intelligibly published on the island," Mr Dacre claimed in written submissions; he accused Britain of "seriously deficient" administration of criminal law, arguing that Pitcairners believed they were subject only to local ordinances on issues such as theft of coconuts from neighbors' palm trees, and the branding of goats and chickens. Crown prosecutor Simon Mount dismissed this argument as "extraordinary," saying that the defense submission would make Pitcairn "a zone of criminal immunity, where men would have been free to rape women and young girls with no legal consequences whatsoever".

*Claire Harvey, 19 April 2005. The Australian news.com*

THE ONLY OTHER news from Pitcairn concerns the infamous road that leads up from the landing, dubbed the "Hill of Diffi-

culty." This steep road is being paved, and a new museum is under construction in the village.

## JUAN FERNÁNDEZ ISLANDS

CIVIL AERONAUTICS DEPARTMENT officials are threatening to close the airport in the Juan Fernández Islands unless the runway is repaired. Planes have been landing on the edges of the runway to avoid big holes in the surface. The report added that an average of two flights arrive every day, which seems like a lot, given the destination.

## TUVALU

IN 1999, TUVALU, WITH A POPULATION OF 11,000 was the 3<sup>rd</sup> poorest state in the world. But then Tuvalu received a domain name on the internet, the letters "tv". A company in California was quick to buy the domain for \$40m. For the Tuvalans, whose average income was about \$1000, this was a life-changing sum. They suddenly became wealthy.

But this came along with global warming and a gloomy forecast, for the islands are only about 3 meters above sea level and Tuvalu will be the first state in the world to be submerged by rising sea waters. The islands will disappear from sight within the next 15-20 years.

Defiant in the face of catastrophe, the Tuvaluans are spending their money to develop land that will soon be underwater. Buildings, including nightclubs, restaurants, and hotels, are being constructed. Of the \$40 million, \$10 million was used to pave the island's 19 km of roads. In 1999 there were four cars on the island but today, huge numbers of cars are cruising on newly-laid roads. The vehicle influx came along with a wave of imported foods and goods. Many islanders, having given up exercise, became obese, and problems such as high blood pressure and diabetes are now common. Others found that maintaining vehicles was beyond their means and unnecessary in a state that is just 26 sq km, so now a large area in the center is covered with abandoned cars and other rubbish.

Residents do not find the building boom strange. "Just because we are sinking, it doesn't mean we don't want to raise our standard of living," said one. Another islander was sure that there was going to be a rush of eco-tourism and planned to build a café, a bar, and a bakery on his ancestor's burial ground. But he died of diabetes before his vision was realized. Another family has started building a nightclub, the first of its kind in Tuvalu. It is like rearranging the deck chairs on the *Titanic*.

What options do the Tuvaluans have? Mass immigration to the nearby island of Kioa is out of the question; that island will not take any more newcomers. Australia is not enthusiastic about letting Tuvaluans in, and New Zealand will absorb them only on a basis of an annual quota.

*After Daphna Baram, Guardian Weekly for March 25-31, 2005. Page 18.*

## THE MYSTERY OF LA PÉROUSE

AS ONE OF THE EARLY VISITORS to Easter Island, the name La Pérouse is a familiar one to Rapanuiphiles. Count Jean-François de Galaup de la Pérouse sailed from Brest on August 1, 1785, at the head of one of the largest voyages of explora-

tion of the time. He was a brilliant and experienced naval captain and took with him 220 men, the cream of French science, including botanists, doctors, naturalists and a surgeon.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Britain and France were in constant rivalry for control of the world's seas and following the success of Captain Cook's exploits in the Pacific, France was eager to match his achievements; Louis XVI personally contributed to the expedition. The voyage was expected to last four years and cover 150,000 km.

La Pérouse landed on Easter Island in April 1786; the bay where he anchored is named for him. He was on the island a very short time, eleven hours, but the French were observant and managed to see a great deal of the island during their visit. They left behind a pair of hogs, three sheep, and a pair of goats; the expedition gardener sowed seeds: cabbage, beets, maize, pumpkin, lemon, and others. None were ever seen again.

La Pérouse described the curiosity of the Rapanui: some came aboard his ships and carefully inspected the cables, masts, anchor, steering wheel, etc. The Frenchmen visited Rano Kau and the quarry at Rano Raraku. La Pérouse seems to be the first to postulate that the island once had a dense forest that was cut down by the islanders, causing the barren landscape they observed.

The ships continued on into the Pacific. By 1788 they were in Botany Bay, Australia, where they wintered, and sent a last report to Maréchal de Castries, the French naval minister. Then the *Astrolabe* and *Boussole*, the two frigates that made up the expedition, sailed on, to the northeast towards Tonga and New Caledonia. And they vanished.

But now the mystery seems to be solved. La Pérouse's ships foundered about a mile apart on a reef off Vanikoro, a tiny island in the southern Solomons. Amateur divers began exploring the site in 1981 and made several finds. In 2003, the discovery of a skull gave impetus to the search for a solution to the mystery of the explorer's disappearance. Now a team of divers and historians based in nearby New Caledonia is trying to find the answer to one of the greatest mysteries in France's seafaring history. It is still not known what caused the accident, what became of La Pérouse, or whether anyone survived and escaped from Vanikoro.

The earliest finds from 1981 were remarkable, including thousands of items: a watch, china, glasses, silver salvers and several sculptures. In 1986, to ward off accusations of pilfering, the group joined forces with archaeologists based in Nouméa, thus improving the scientific quality of their work. Many of the discoveries, identified and restored, are on view at the La Pérouse Museum in Albi (the explorer's birthplace in the south of France) and the Museum of Maritime History in New Caledonia.

The fifth expedition in 1999 discovered a "camp" on Vanikoro and found flints, flattened musket balls, nails, uniform buttons, a measuring instrument, and a small cannon. These objects were spread over an area covering some 20 to 30 square meters, and confirmed a local tradition that survivors from the wreck were able to land and built a boat in which to escape.

A later expedition returned in the hope of finding graves adjoining the French camp. But it was the seabed that yielded a major find: hidden in a crack in the outside of the reef at a

depth of 15 meters, divers found a remarkably well-preserved skeleton. Encased in a thick layer of sediment, the skeleton was of a man of medium build, between 31 and 35 years. Because of the perfect condition of his teeth, he was almost certainly an officer or a scientist. Pathologists at France's Institute of Criminal Research in Rosny sous Bois, east of Paris, are still examining the remains. For some time the most likely candidate was the draughtsman Gaspard Duché de Vancy, but DNA tests were inconclusive. Working on a cast of the skull, Elizabeth Daynes, who specializes in making models for palaeontological exhibitions, produced a striking reconstruction of the man's face, but his identity is still unknown.

An expedition of more than 100 participants excavated and searched in and around Vanikoro in May and June in the hope that they may finally answer the question of what happened to La Pérouse's ships and crew.

*After Claudine Wéry, Guardian Weekly, April 2005.*

## WHAT'S NEW IN HANGA ROA

THE RATTY OLD JAIL ON RAPA NUI has been declared "unworthy" by the prefect of Police Investigations for Zone V, who stated that it is not only too small but also in poor condition. The jail is in a house of only 500 square feet and termites have destroyed its wood doors and furniture. The Civil Police invested \$16,000 in an architectural study for a new jail. There was a proposal for \$300,000 but the money never was allocated. The island's chief of police stated that he hopes the money will be forthcoming because a new jail is a high priority item. Only the non-dangerous prisoners are kept in the island jail; the real baddies are put on a plane and sent to Valparaíso.

*El Mercurio de Valparaíso, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2005.*

### VANDALISM VS "CONCEPTUAL ART"

A CANADIAN ARTIST, MONTREAL-BASED William Vazan, age 71, was detained on Rapa Nui in April. He was accused of moving rocks of archaeological value in order to create a ground sculpture 10.8 meters long (35 feet) in the outline of an octopus. He also built stone circles ("nests") at Kari Kari, near 'Orongo's sacred site, Mata Ngarau, and at the site of Te Pahu. Attorney Oscar Vargas stated that he discovered another "intervention" in the sector of Puna Pau, where Vazan moved valuable archaeological pieces around.

The administrator of the Rapa Nui National Park said that Vazan's "creations" constitute vandalism because he removed artifacts such as *poro* and *paenga*, but others said the main problem was that he used a sacred place for a personal (foreign) purpose. Both Rapanui and Chilean authorities were upset and angry and wanted Vazan jailed.

Born in Toronto, Vazan taught at the Université du Québec à Montréal and has been a "land artist" since the 1960s, producing works that combine natural forms with imagery reminiscent of ancient traditions. He has completed other "land art" projects in Peru and Chile. Vazan was quoted as saying that he paid an Easter Island resident, Genaro Gatica, 20 years old, to help carry the stones and identify sacred ones so that he could avoid them (however, Gatica is not a Rapanui, so he is unlikely to know sacred from profane).